



# News Release

## Maryland National Guard



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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

#### **AIR NATIONAL GUARD UNIT WINS TOP AWARD**

**BALTIMORE**, Sept. 29, 2004 – A unit of the Maryland Air National Guard was awarded the National Guard Association of the United States' (NGAUS) top flying safety award officials announced today.

The William W. Spruance Safety Award, which recognizes the unit that contributed most significantly to accident prevention during a given year, was awarded to the 135th Airlift Squadron at the NGAUS annual conference in Las Vegas.

"This year marks the fourth time the unit has won the award since NGAUS began presenting it in 1980," said Col. Guy M. Walsh, commander of the 175th Wing of the Maryland Air National Guard. "It reflects the level of effort our members put into being safe and professional."

The 135th Airlift Squadron previously won the award in 1991, 1997, and 1998.

"The unit has accumulated over 172,000 flying hours without a major mishap," said Lt. Col. Thomas E. Hans, the squadron commander. "We couldn't have flown so many hours or won the award so many times if safety wasn't an ingrained part of our unit culture."

The Maryland Air National Guard is comprised of a State Headquarters in Baltimore, the 175th Wing at Martin State airport and its two flying units and support staff – the 104th Fighter Squadron and its A-10 jet fighters, and the 135th Airlift Squadron and its C-130J cargo aircraft. More than 1,600 full-time and traditional members are employed by the Maryland Air National Guard, contributing nearly 80 million dollars annually to Maryland's economy.

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